

Remarks

It is respectfully requested that claims 25 - 47 be reconsidered for allowance in view of this Amendment and these Remarks.

The drawing was objected to for not showing a reducing gear recited in claim 36. According, language referring to a reducing gear has been deleted from claim 36, and the drawing objection should be withdrawn.

The Specification was objected because of an inconsistency between pages 15 and 16. Accordingly, the Specification has been amended on page 16, second paragraph to recite that "the mechanical steering device 42 has a straight ahead or zero steering angle" No new matter is introduced by this amendment because original Fig. 2 clearly shows the steering device 42 in a straight ahead position.

Claims 26 - 27 and 40 - 47 were objected to as depending from a cancelled claim. Accordingly, claims 26 - 27 and 40 - 47 have been amended so that they no longer depend from a cancelled claim.

Claims 25 - 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Higasa et al. ('806). Accordingly, claim 25 has been amended to more accurately define the present invention. Amended claim 25 now recites "A steering system for a utility vehicle, the vehicle having a front axle, a rear axle, a pair of front wheels, a pair of rear wheels, an internal combustion engine for driving a mechanical drive for driving the rear wheels on the rear axle and a pair of electric drives, each for driving one of the front wheels ...". This is supported by Fig. 1 which shows internal combustion engine 16 driving a transmission and differential 18. In high power utility vehicle applications (in particular a tractor) the combination of fast reacting electric front wheel drive(s) and powerful mechanical rear wheel drive allows to economically improve the dynamics of the steering characteristics.

In contrast, Higasa shows a system in which the front wheels and the rear wheels are actuated all by individual electric drives and not by a mechanical drive driven by an internal combustion engine (column 1, lines 62-67, column 2, lines 1-11 and Fig. 1 of US 5 465 806). Such an arrangement as recited in amended claim 25 is even identified as disadvantageous in the context of the electric vehicle shown in Higasa (column 2, lines 12-14 and Fig. 2). Thus, amended claim 25 should be allowed and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 26 - 47 should be allowed because they now depend directly or indirectly from allowable amended claim 25.

In conclusion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Any fees or charges due as a result of filing of the present paper may be charged against Deposit Account 04-0525.

Respectfully,

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